



Defending humanity

Eph 6.12

Dear Friends,

More than ever people are asking us about civic renewal and how churches should respond. It's good that people are engaging with these questions, even if only because Covid has laid bare fundamental problems that were decades in the making. Some think 'recovery' is about getting back to normal. But the depth of the crisis is deeper than most realise.

If we are to put things right then we need to face what's gone wrong. Individualism in an extreme form, on both the left and the right, has damaged humanity and weakened our social fabric. Once we appreciate what has happened, we are able to see that renewal means strengthening social trust, building relationships, restructuring the economy and reasserting an authentic understanding of what it means to be a human being.

In this season of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany, of anticipation and incarnation, adopting a constant posture of discernment keeps us attuned to signs of the spirit of renewal at work. There are reasons for hope. We are seeing alliances forming and the calling of Christians being more fully felt, with a greater openness to the action of God's grace in their lives. We encounter this on a daily basis.

Churches have a vital role to play but many are struggling to define a purpose beyond emergency response. What is required is a shift from a contractual mindset to a covenantal orientation. To do this, the local church must restore its relationship with people and with place. A humble church, yet one which defies the powers and defends humanity.

The purpose of our work around **covenant** and **parish** is to help churches wanting to step into this sacred civic role. We are developing this in a continuing partnership with Journal of Missional Practice and the Common Good Foundation: we'll say more about this next time.

We are always learning from across the Christian traditions, and we anticipated that the Methodist understanding of covenant would be illuminating. So we are grateful that **Erica Dunmow** unpacks this for us below, looking at its mission to develop local leadership, lifting up its focus on mutuality, commitment to place, and its gift to our political life.

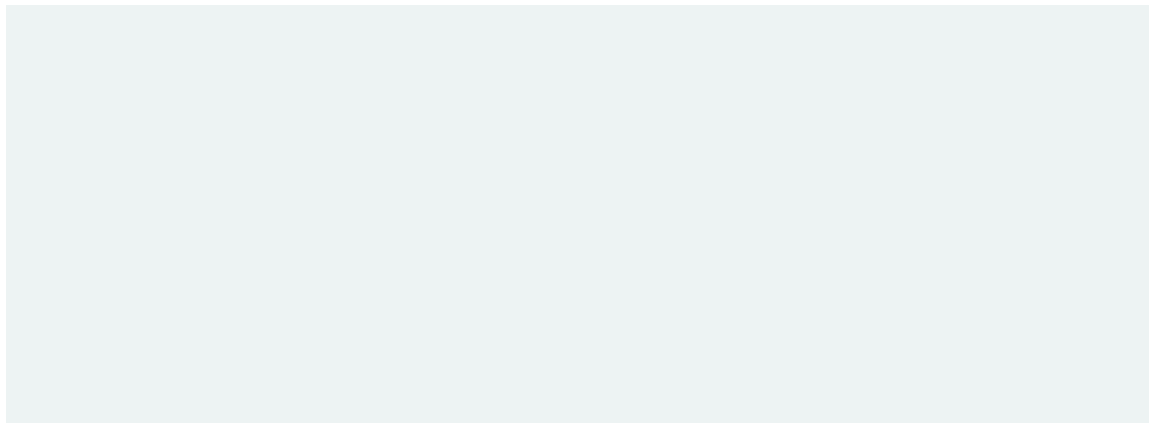
The impact of the Covid era on the Common Good is complex, and as the scale of the fallout becomes clearer, there will be more scrutiny on the decisions that have been taken by government. Catholic social thought helps us understand how to uphold the dignity of the human being, so we are pleased to bring you an essay by **Edward Hadas** who deploys this tradition to examine the non medical effects of lockdown policy.

Also in this edition, you'll find videos from some of the things we have contributed to recently, our latest **signs of the times** collection of articles and some **recommended books**. You can see how to get hold of **T4CG resources**, many of them free to download.

Renewal needs to be deep as well as wide-ranging. If you would like to talk about what this might mean where you are, we are here to help. It has been a pleasure to talk with all of you who have been in touch already. **Contact us:** info@togetherforthecommongood.co.uk

We hope you find plenty here to inspire and learn from in the dark nights ahead. Thank you for traveling with us, we value the connection with you.

We wish you a joyful Christmas, a blessed Epiphany and a happy New Year
Together for the Common Good





How should the churches respond to the new era?

Here we share a six minute audio visual prepared for the Churches Together England conference 2020 by **Jenny Sinclair**, founder director of T4CG. To view this on our website and read the text, [click here](#).



Covenant and mutuality in mission: a Methodist perspective

Here, **Erica Dunmow**, Chair of Urban Theology Union, explores the concept of Covenant through the Methodist tradition. Tracing the links between its distinctive commitment to place, Wesley's focus on social holiness, its mission to develop local leadership, mutuality, and its gift to our political life, she draws out vital insights for the churches as we focus on civic renewal for the Common Good.

[Read more](#)



The Assault on Humanity

Catholic Social Teaching looks at the policy of lockdowns

Views on lockdown policy have become very polarised, and this can inhibit the wisdom and impact of decisions taken. This essay by **Edward Hadas**, author of a new book about Catholic social teaching, deploys six of its key principles to examine the non-medical effects of lockdown policy - the social, economic, political and psychological impact. Even if you disagree with him, our hope is that it will prompt you to think deeply about how the human being is both treated and conceptualised.

[Read more](#)



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PEOPLE



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SCHOOLS



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RESOURCES

Equipped to build the Common Good?

Our resources for churches, individuals and for schools help you to play your part in civic renewal. Have a look round our website and feel free to get in touch. All our material is geared to help you build local relationships and to strengthen social trust.

[Learn more](#)



Can Covenant help us build a more collaborative society?

Here we share a discussion between **Jenny Sinclair** and **Steve Wyler** about what's gone wrong with our society and how the concept of covenant can help to redeem it. Steve is co-founder of A Better Way, an independent group of mainly secular leaders from the voluntary, public and private sectors who want to improve services and strengthen communities. The network is open to leaders of faith-based charities.

[Read the discussion](#)



Institutional reform and human flourishing

T4CG was an endorsing partner of a recent Jubilee Centre conference called *Seeds of Change: Institutional reform and human flourishing post Covid-19*. Our director **Jenny Sinclair** was the respondent to presentations by **David Lee** and **Craig Bartholomew** in a discussion chaired by **John Coffey**. The two key questions were: What kinds of institutional reforms can we imagine and promote following the Covid-19 pandemic? What part can Christianity play in this movement for social reform?

[Read more and watch video](#)



T4CG's Common Good lay leadership partnership gets going

We are excited that our partnership to bring our “Here: Now: Us People” lay leadership engagement resources into five dioceses is getting off the ground. All the partners recently met together on zoom and pledged to be a support for each other in the months ahead. Between them they will train up to 400 parishioners, staff and volunteers. The partnership comprises Caritas bodies in Nottingham, Brentwood and Shrewsbury, plus Nugent in Liverpool and St Mary Moorfields in the City of London and is led by Chris Knowles for T4CG. [Read more](#)



Signs of the times: Winter 2020

We scan the landscape so you don't have to. Here is our latest selection of articles and podcasts including material by **Glenn Greenwald, Matthew Goodwin, Lord Glasman, Suzanne Moore, Rod Dreher, Paul Embery, Ruth Davis, Danny Kruger, David Goodhart, Trevor Phillips, Sohrab Ahmari, Timandra Harkness, Michael Lind, Jessica Studdert** and many more. [Click here to explore the articles.](#)

We are steadily building up our collection of material on racial justice, which you can find [here](#), featuring material by **Chloe Valdery, Inaya Folarin Iman, Esau McCaulley, John McWhorter, Helen Pluckrose, Cedric Johnson, Toure Reed** and many others.



Signs of the times: the churches

As attention turns to renewal, how are the churches placed to play their part?

Graham Tomlin, Jane Williams and Mike Lloyd with **Maurice Glasman** (podcast)

[The civic role of the church and the significance of place](#)

Gary Jenkins [Where are the working class?](#)

Esau McCaulley [How the black church tradition teaches hope](#)

Chris Knowles [Pope Francis, peoples and preparing for the future with Fratelli Tutti](#)

Al Roxburgh [Vocational and faithful imagination](#)

Andrew Rumsey [The Mustard Pot: 'parish' in contemporary mission and culture](#)

Val Barron [A deeper solidarity with all our co-workers](#)

Anna Rowlands [Dark times: a call for a new politics](#)

Capital Mass [A money toolkit to help people struggling with debt](#)

Charnelle Barclay [Pentecostalism, social justice and community organising](#)

Caritas Westminster [UK faith leaders call for commission to tackle child poverty](#)

Vincent Nichols and Malcolm McMahon [statement on national lockdown](#)

Stephen Cottrell [Time to get real about living wages](#)

Madeleine Pennington, Theos [The Church and Social Cohesion](#)

Hannah Rich, Theos [Growing Good: Growth, Social Action & Discipleship in C of E](#)



Recommended books

This is our latest selection. Click [here](#) to find those we've suggested earlier in the year.

Abraham Joshua Heschel [The Sabbath](#)

Sohrab Ahmari

[The Unbroken Thread: Rediscovering the Wisdom of Tradition in an Age of Chaos](#)

Esau McCaulley

[Reading While Black: African American Biblical Interpretation as an Exercise in Hope](#)

Paul Embery [Despised: Why the Modern Left Loathes the Working Class](#)

Edward Hadas [Counsels of Imperfection: Thinking Through Catholic Social Teaching](#)

Pope Francis [Let Us Dream: the Path to a Better Future](#)

You may also be interested in

- [Leading Thinkers](#) collection of articles
- [Common Good thinking](#) and Catholic social thought

What is the Common Good?

The Common Good is the **shared life** of a society in which everyone can flourish - as we act together in different ways that all contribute towards that goal, enabled by social conditions that mean every single person can participate.

We create these conditions and pursue that goal by working together across our differences, each of us taking responsibility, according to our calling and ability.

Find out more and explore our free resources



Supporting T4CG

Don't be deceived by our smart appearance.

We are not fully funded, we just work way beyond the call of duty!
You can help the work become sustainable by making a regular donation.

Please consider lending your support - click [here](#) to donate. Thank you.



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About us

Together for the Common Good is a charity working to strengthen the bonds of social trust.
Our work calls people to fulfil their vocational responsibility by putting Common Good principles into practice

and by working with others of different opinions and backgrounds in shared purpose.

T4CG works with people across the churches and beyond. We create resources, broker relationships and convene conversations.

We are non partisan, independent, ecumenical and proud of our different Christian traditions.

Our People

Team: Jenny Sinclair (Founder Director), Alison Gelder (Director of Operations, p/t)

Louise Lambert (Team Support Worker, p/t), Chris Knowles (Here: Now: Us People project leader, p/t)

Board of Trustees: Richard Holman (Chair), Holly Terry (Company Secretary), Sophie Stanes, Geoff Knott, Edward Hadas

T4CG punches above its weight thanks to help-in-kind and our partners and associates who contribute on a pro bono basis to different strands of our work, too many to name here. [Download](#) the latest T4CG annual report to find out more.

Our sincere thanks

We are most grateful to our regular donors for their faithful generosity.

The Sisters of Mercy kindly allow us to use free office space.



CCLA has generously sponsored the design and build of our smart new website.



If this message has been forwarded to you, and you would like to add your own email address to the list, you can [subscribe to our newsletter here](#). [Read our previous newsletters here](#).

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